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WHY WE CAN'T HAVE NICE THINGS

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Real Madrid's Sergio Ramos celebrates during a Spanish La Liga soccer match on March 12.
FRANCISCO SECO/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

This could be YOU

Real Madrid brings summer soccer camp to Calgary, metroNEWS

Film industry calls for cash flow overhaul

ECONOMY

Creators point to potential threatened by media-fund cut

Aaron Chatha
Metro | Calgary

Following last week's cut to the Alberta Media Fund, some experts in the province's film and TV sector are hoping to overhaul the industry's funding model.

"We're working diligently with the provincial government to ensure we identify the needs of the industry and to see if we can come up with a model that actually works well for Alberta and is able to meet the success metrics the province needs," said Luke Azevedo, film and television commissioner at Calgary Economic Development.

He believes implementing a system to incentivize all parts of the film sector and increasing the grant caps on larger ventures would convince those lucrative projects to come to the province.

In last week's budget, the NDP reduced the Alberta Media Fund from $36.9 million to $34 million. Mayor Nenshi expressed disappointment, considering the city requested an increase to $50 million.

"It's an industry that needs to grow significantly in Alberta because it supports a lot of jobs and a lot of good jobs," Nenshi said.

The fund is seen as an important incentive for projects of large and small scale.

Barry Thorson, executive director of the Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers (CSIF), said these funds make investors in the province more likely to jump aboard a project, many of which require five or six different investors to get off the ground.

"It's how people make their livings," said Thorson. "It's not a 'nice to have'; it's an absolute."

Azevedo pointed out the potential that filmmaking has in the province to become a half-billion-dollar industry within five to seven years. With so much money and effort put into opening the Calgary Film Centre last year, it's important to support creators. Having a full slate of programming year-round ensures people are consistently working.

The Alberta Media Fund has grown in size since the NDP came into power. In 2015 the budget was only $24.9 million, but this latest decrease is still seen as a blow to film production in the province.

Culture and tourism minister Ricardo Miranda said in a statement that the budget does include a one-time increase of $5 million through the Capital Investment Tax credit, which could help organizations like CSIF.

WITH FILES FROM BRODIE THOMAS/METRO

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Election gets shiny new features

Online candidate profiles finally make an appearance to help Calgarians decide

HELEN PIKE METRO

This won't be your grandpa's election.

Calgary's returning officer has implemented fresh ideas in hopes they will get municipal voters, especially millennials, excited to cast their ballots this October. Initiatives will be presented to councillors for the first time on Tuesday.

On the list are simple things like adding stops for the Advance Vote bus, and giving voters stickers they can proudly wear after they've practised their municipal rights and participated in the city's democratic process.

According to the data, Calgary is middle of the class when it comes to voter turnout. The average since 1974 is 36 per cent.

But Coun. Evan Woolley thinks we can do better, and he's hoping on top of some of these fresh ideas, he can rally to do even more — including looking at voter age.

He originally asked the returning officer for a report on the feasibility of free transit on election day.

"Every time someone brings forward an idea we say, 'That's not going to change it that much,' but there's lots and lots of ideas, right?" said Woolley.

"If we start piecing together, start working on a whole lot of ideas and start engaging Calgarians in politics and democracy then we start to turn the curve."

CONTRIBUTED

Woolley said he's disappointed that the report doesn't include a future vision for the municipal elections to come.

"What is our vision to increase voters?" Woolley asked. "We have goals of waste diversion from our landfill sites, right? What are our goals and targets to increase voter turnout and to really set a longer term framework to do that?"

He said the city needs to start measuring and driving outcomes for the municipal elections.

Here are five things to know about the 2017 municipal election, and increased accessibility for voters:

1 Candidate profile pages on the city's website

It seems like a no-brainer. But this will be the first year the city's election website will have candidate profiles voters can browse and read up on. It should help voters engage more with candidates.

2 Free transit on election day

A voter information brochure will have your free transit ticket included in the package. The city will be tracking these tickets to see how they were used. So, although transit won't be free for all, if you're voting, you can take advantage of this.

3 Expanding Advance Vote locations

This election the advance vote locations will come to all of the city's major post-secondary campuses.

4 "I voted" sticker

A sticker to show you participated, you care, and something Woolley said could help get people engaged on social media about voting.

5 More Advance Vote Bus stops

The bus will now also stop by the Drop In Centre, and other locations so that people with accessibility issues can easily cast their ballots.

JOURNALISM

Metro gets NNA nomination for Fort McMurray coverage

Metro Calgary and Metro Edmonton have been named finalists in the National Newspaper Awards for coverage of the Fort McMurray wildfires.

The papers are nominated in the breaking news category for stories detailing the first 36 hours of evacuation efforts.

The coverage chronicled first-person accounts of some of the more than 88,000 fleeing the city, provided timely information to Albertans as the wildfires grew and delivered stories of courage and giving.

"The devastating effect of the Fort McMurray wildfires will not be forgotten by Alberta, or Canada," said Cathrin Bradbury, vice-president and editor-in-chief of Metro English Canada.

"We're tremendously proud of the work done by our Alberta reporting teams, with the support of their Toronto colleagues, to document the bravery and fear of those first crucial hours."

Winners of the National Newspaper Awards will be announced May 5 in Toronto.

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INDIGENOUS ISSUES

Iniskim celebrates 10 years

Elizabeth Cameron
For Metro | Calgary

The Iniskim Centre offers programs and services for Indigenous students at MRU while raising awareness on campus about Indigenous peoples and cultures.

Iniskim Centre naming ceremony — 2007
The grand opening was March 21, 2007. Several dignitaries attended, including the Chiefs of the Treaty 7 Nations and premier Ralph Klein.

Medicine Trail Program launched — 2009
The Medicine Trail Program provides guidance and awareness of Indigenous cultures and supports curriculum development and research.

Aboriginal Science and Technology Program (ASTEP) announced — 2011
ASTEP fosters a supportive learning model for Indigenous students preparing for and studying in Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Computer Information Systems degree programs.

The Indigenous Strategic Plan — 2015
The Indigenous Strategic Plan 2016-2021 was approved by the President's Executive Council in August 2016 and aims to respect, integrate and embrace Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing throughout campus.

Treaty 7 and Métis flags raised on campus — 2016
On the morning of Nov. 1, the Treaty 7 and Métis flags were both raised to their new and permanent positions on the Mount Royal campus.

SOURCE: CATCH THE GLEAM (2011) BY DONALD NOEL BAKER AND MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY

Leaders taking baby steps to party merger

POLITICS

Jean says he's walking into Kenney talks with open mind

Newly elected leader of the Alberta PC party Jason Kenney answers questions at a news conference Sunday. Inset: Wildrose Leader Brian Jean. THE CANADIAN PRESS; KEVIN TUONG/FOR METRO

The leader of Alberta's Opposition Wildrose party was trying to keep expectations low for his first meeting with Jason Kenney following the Alberta Progressive Conservative leadership race.

Brian Jean said he wanted to congratulate Kenney on his election as leader and start drawing a road map on how the two parties could merge.

"I'm not going to get into the details of how this merger will work," he said Monday. "I'm walking into this meeting with an open mind and I'm hoping that we'll have a good constructive meeting."

But Jean stressed again that any new conservative party would have to be created under a Wildrose legal framework and with the approval of Wildrose members. He also said he's committed to becoming Alberta's next premier.

"If I receive that privilege, I'm sure it will be behind a consolidated conservative movement going forward."

Premier Rachel Notley congratulated Kenney on his victory but didn't waste any time criticizing his plan to repeal the bulk of the NDP's legislative agenda. She said that would mean "putting big money back into politics, raising school fees, recrowding our school classrooms and reversing the approval on (the) Kinder Morgan" pipeline.

"I would suggest pretty quickly he'll have to come clean on what his actual plans are," she said.

"I look forward to having our mainstream ideas contrasted with the rather more extreme ideas that we hear from folks on the other side of the aisle."

Also on Monday, a group of five lawyers released a legal review that suggests there is no reason why the Progressive Conservative and Wildrose parties cannot legally join to form a new political entity before the next provincial election.

The lawyers have been working on the issue since last fall and include supporters from both parties.

"We have concluded that a merger can be done," said spokesman Andy Crooks. "Moreover, it is our opinion that it can be done without the consent of the chief electoral officer of Elections Alberta."

> **Some really smart people said these parties have got to merge.**
> Dave Yager

Alberta election rules forbid two parties from merging and dictates that they fold up and surrender their assets. But the lawyers suggested both parties could register as corporations and merge as corporate entities. That would also allow the transfer of assets between the two parties.

Crooks said Elections Alberta should have waited until it received a proposal.

"The Elections Alberta office was starting to issue press releases. Now, we weren't asked to answer these questions, but neither were they. We're simply volunteer lawyers. They on the other hand are regulators with serious powers," he said.

The team of lawyers was recruited by former Wildrose party president Dave Yager, who was told by some donors and party members to "go figure it out."

"The issue is not what, but how," he said. "Everyone's been talking about what to do since the last election and some really smart people said these parties have got to merge."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

REDEVELOPMENT

Maple's project nearing tee off

Brodie Thomas
Metro | Calgary

Maple Projects Inc. has the green light to turn the former Highland Park Golf Course into Highland Village Green, but not before an important water report is complete.

Council voted 9-6 to allow Maple Projects Inc. to move forward on its development, despite fierce opposition from surrounding residents.

The latest version of the project featured a much larger central green space, which was one of the sticking points.

Marvin Quashnick, VP of the Thorncliffe-Greenview Community Association, said the upgrade from 1.34 hectares to 3.5 hectares of green space was good but did not make up for the project's other shortcomings.

"Yes, the amount of green space is important, but it's the quality of the green space that's also a factor," he said. "That for this site is almost more important than the quantity, because of all the natural features there that could be enhanced."

Quashnick said it shows how dysfunctional the city's planning system is. Mayor Naheed Nenshi voted against the plan and said he has specific concerns with stormwater drainage.

"No shovels will touch any dirt until the groundwater study is completed, which should be another year and a half or so," said the mayor.

Ajay Nehru, president of Maple Projects Inc., said they are ready to accommodate extra stormwater drainage.

"We have a 26-metre-wide road, which if needed, will incorporate a second storm duct," said Nehru.

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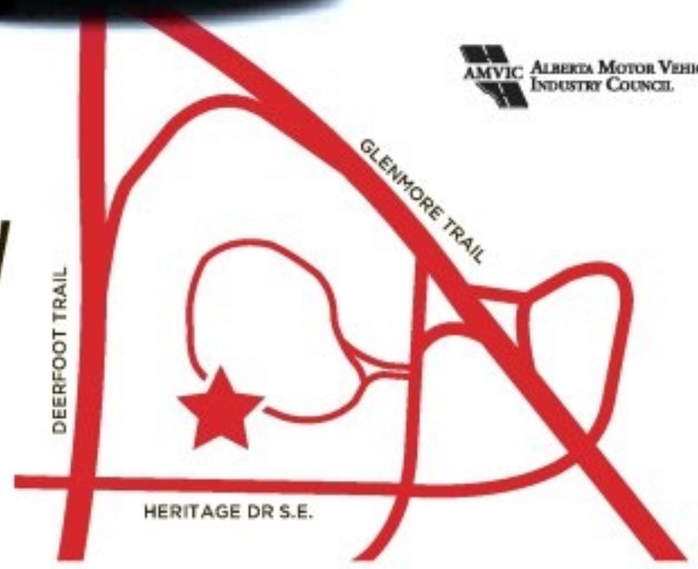

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Calgarians aren't calling the airport to complain as much as they used to. DREAMSTIME

Noise complaints drop

COMMUNITY

Airport finds 66 per cent of calls come from eight regulars

Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

Is airport noise going down?

According to the airport authority, they saw 39 per cent fewer calls last year. The airport, like many in North America, has repeat callers.

In Calgary, these top two callers are making four calls a day, and contributing to 46 per cent of concerns. Six more make up 20 per cent of calls.

"The good news is planes are materially quieter than even 10 years ago, but to some people it's still disturbing," said airport CEO Robert Sartor. "We work really hard to try and avoid those complaints."

He said omitting those eight people, who make up 66 per cent of calls, and their figures for concerns trend much lower.

From what he understands these individuals have been contacting the airport about noise for years. He noted for some individuals the only thing that will dampen their concerns about airport noise is shutting down the airport all together. "There's some constituencies with which we will never win," Sartor said.

> **"There's some constituencies with which we will never win.**
> Robert Sartor

Coun. Ray Jones joked that he probably knows four of the eight callers.

Mayor Naheed Nenshi said last year, Sartor was talking about narrowing flight paths to impact less homes.

"I was surprised to hear they're not discussing changing the contours," said Nenshi. "I need to follow up on that."

He said if the noise "drives you crazy, it drives you crazy" but he's confident that the community consultation committee are doing great work to reduce the noise to existing communities.

In 2016, the airport worked with NAV Canada, Transport Canada, air carriers and community members. They started several "noise abatement" projects in 2016.

One, put in place last May, is called a required navigation performance approach. According to the airport authority, it lowered noise and also lowered emissions by having planes use less fuel as they approached.

Two noise-problem areas Rundle and Marlborough got "noise monitoring terminals."

Studies that concluded over the year are available online. Along with a new resource called "public view" which shows airport activity and live time flights, questions and concerns can be submitted through the system.

INFRASTRUCTURE

New trail extension debated

The city and Calgary Airport Authority are sparring over how to build the Airport Trail extension.

On Monday, during the authority's annual update, Mayor Naheed Nenshi conceded the city would have a "lot to talk about" after they didn't see eye to eye on a construction plan.

Last week, the provincial budget promised an unspecified sum for the Airport Tail extension, and Nenshi is waiting for the federal budget, where there may be more cash waiting for the city's "number one" roadway priority.

"Likely this means we will have to phase the work between west of 36 Street and east of 36 Street, likely doing east of 36 Street first," said Nenshi.

Airport CEO Robert Sartor said there's a tunnel sublease agreement with the city that sees the extension beyond Barlow Trail and 36 Street — eventually to Stoney Trail — all built at the same time as the interchanges on Barlow, and 19 Street.

"Without those interchanges we'll have traffic lights," Sartor said. "Once we open it up all the way past Metis Trail to Stoney, that Airport Trail will become a very busy thoroughfare. With traffic lights, it's going to be jammed and that's our worry."

He said cargo operators will "simply go elsewhere" if they can't move their trucks in and out of the airport campus efficiently.

Nenshi called the airport authority's simultaneous construction viewpoint unhelpful.

HELEN PIKE/METRO

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Real Madrid Foundation's Campus Experience took place in Madrid last year. The soccer camp will be hosting their inaugural Canadian camp in Calgary in July. CONTRIBUTED

'More than teaching kids to play soccer'

YOUTH

City chosen to host first Canadian Real Madrid camp

Lucie Edwardson
Metro | Calgary

This summer, Calgary kids will have the opportunity to "live and breathe the life of their favourite soccer stars" at the inaugural Canadian Real Madrid Foundation Campus Experience soccer camp.

Kris Hazari, communications director for Calgary based company Krakr Sports — who has partnered with the Real Madrid Foundation to bring the camp Calgary — said the camp is focused on more than just soccer.

"It's more than teaching kids to play soccer — it's about living the life of a Real Madrid player, mentally and physically," she said. "What does Cristiano Ronaldo do before practice? After practice? What are his health and nutrition needs? His mental preparedness?"

Hazari said professional coaches trained in the Real Madrid values will come to Calgary to lead the camp.

"We believe that sport is important to a child's life, not just for the physical but everything else they can learn," she said.

Ramon Mifflin, technical director for Calgary's Southwest United soccer club, said it's an excellent opportunity for Calgary players to see how "one of the top class clubs in the world" operates.

"I think we're always trying to keep up with the European and South American sides, so it would be a great opportunity and experience for youth players in Calgary to exposed to that," he said.

Hazari said the philosophy of the camp is based on the foundation's pillars: teamwork, leadership, hard work and self-control. As of right now, Hazari said it's hard to say if any of the Real Madrid players will make a celebrity appearance due to ongoing changes in schedules — but it's not totally out of the realm of possibility.

"That's not to say that it might be a possibility in a little while," she said, adding that the foundation is the Real Madrid club's way of giving back to give back and impart values inherent in sport as an educational tool.

The Real Madrid Foundation Campus Experience will host 120 co-ed campers between the ages of seven and 17-years-old and will take place from July 24-28.

Early-bird registration is open now, and will close at the end of the month. Visit campusexperiencermf.com/Calgary for more information.

Hazari said she hopes the camp will expand to other Canadian cities in coming years.

ANIMAL RESCUE

Cat House gives back after devastating loss

Autumn Fox
For Metro | Calgary

The Cat House — Calgary's go-to destination for specialty cat care products — is turning their loss into a major gain for two Alberta animal shelters.

Calgarians gave generously to a crowd funding campaign to rebuild The Cat House after a massive fire destroyed the business in November of 2015.

Despite the best efforts to find a new home for The Cat House, owner Joanne Wegiel announced the decision to abandon the traditional brick and mortar storefront that had been operating for more than 24 years and focus on maintaining a smaller online store.

That left more than $26,000 in donations earmarked for reopening the business.

On Sunday, March 19, Wegiel donated more than $11,000 of that money to the MEOW Foundation, a non-profit that is currently fundraising to complete the construction of a new cat rescue and adoption facility in northeast Calgary.

> **It gives us some comfort to know that some good has come out of the fire.**
> Joanne Wegiel

"It was extremely generous of them, it was quite a shock," said Jason Thomas, board director at MEOW Foundation. "It wasn't something we had expected."

Wegiel said The Cat House would also be making a donation in the same amount to the Cochrane and Area Humane Society with the intention of improving their cat rooms, as well as smaller donations to the Alberta Animal Crew Rescue Society, ARTS Senior Animal Rescue and Whisker Rescue Society of Alberta.

Wegiel said the loss of her business has been hard on herself and customers of The Cat House, but said they've found solace in giving back.

"It gives us some comfort to know that some good has come out of the fire," she said.

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Ceci defends debt as credit rating agencies criticize it

POLITICS

Finance minister says revenues to grow over time

Alberta's provincial debt is growing but remains "manageable," despite criticism from credit rating agencies following last week's budget, Alberta Finance Minister Joe Ceci says.

Agencies including Moody's Investor Service and DBRS Ltd. say they are reviewing the province's ratings, which are used to determine its cost of borrowing money, because of its growing debt levels.

In a speech to the Calgary Chamber of Commerce on Monday morning, Ceci says he expects Alberta revenues will grow with its economy over time to reduce the deficits.

"I certainly understand, appreciate the credit rating concerns people have, but I think if we keep care of the fundamentals in this province, which is continuing to move forward, continue to have good governance, continue to be an attractor with low taxes, and promote this province to others, we'll take care of those other things," he said.

"What we'll see going forward is an expansion of the economy."

Chamber president Adam Legge said the budget was based more on hope than being realistic and said the government must work to shrink the gap between revenue and spending.

The province expects a $10.3-billion deficit for the coming fiscal year which starts April 1 and forecasts that its debt will rise to $71.1 billion by 2020.

> **What we'll see going forward is an expansion.**
> Joe Ceci

"Alberta's rapidly rising debt burden, protracted deficits and above-inflation expense growth continue to put significant pressure on its rating," stated Adam Hardi, Moody's assistant vice-president in a news release on Friday.

"The province's plan to issue an additional $38 billion in debt over the next three years to finance its operating deficits and capital plans will contribute to a rising debt burden that may approach 150 per cent of revenues by 2019-20 (on a Moody's adjusted basis)."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Alberta Finance Minister Joe Ceci. KEVIN TUONG/FOR METRO

LOTTERY

Local man wins $1 million

A Calgary man said he was "shocked" when he discovered he'd won $1,000,000 through Lotto 6/49.

Charles Stevenson won the million-dollar prize on the only Guaranteed Prize Draw Feb. 18.

"It's overwhelming," he said. "I checked the ticket twice, in two different stores, to make sure I was seeing things right. I was just vibrating for hours."

Stevenson plans on using his winnings to enjoy some fun in the sun with a trip to Mexico this month. METRO

SNOW MOBILE ACCIDENT

Teen hurt in crash

A 14-year-old teen is recovering in hospital following a snowmobile crash in Alberta's backcountry Monday morning.

Crowsnest Pass RCMP said STARS air ambulance and the Kananaskis search and rescue team were dispatched to the backcountry near Lost Creek on Monday morning after a snowmobile collision was reported.

Pincher Creek RCMP and fire services then worked to locate a 14-year-old who had been injured. While the young man's injuries were reported to be significant but not life threatening, STARS was utilized for transport to the Pincher Creek Health Centre due to the remote location of the crash. METRO

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University of Calgary president Elizabeth Cannon says fundamentals of the Eyes High strategy remain, but campus culture and student experience come out more clearly. METRO FILE

University sets Eyes High-er

EDUCATION

New student-focused strategy takes U of C into 2022

Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

It took a load of student, faculty and staff participation to energize the University of Calgary's newest version of their Eyes High strategy.

Setting their sights even higher since the last strategy was published in 2011, this new document will lead the U of C through a new generation.

It seeks to: further sharpen their focus on research and scholarships, better learning quality, and integrate the U of C with its surrounding community. Particularly, this strategy puts the "student experience" in the forefront.

We're in a different place as an institution, Calgary is in a different place.
Elizabeth Cannon

"We're in a different place as an institution, Calgary is in a different place, post-secondary educations has evolved, that needed to be reflected," said president Elizabeth Cannon.

This time around there was a move to engage the whole community, online and in person. More than 10,000 "engagement points" were recorded and the school had 4,000 or more participate in their survey and focus groups.

Cannon said the fundamental pinnacles of the strategy stayed the same, but woven campus culture and student experience came out in a more tangible way than the first version of the strategy.

Stephan Guscott, the Students' Union president, said students' voices are brought to focus with the new strategy — he said for students, there's nothing missing in the new strategy.

"It strongly addresses the feedback students gave," said Guscott. "Five years down the road, when the strategy is focusing on things like infrastructure, community and experiential learning I think focusing on those things there will be some really cool small changes that are made including programs, but also big changes that will change a lot of students' experience at the U of C."

AIRPORT

Terminal gets upgrades after complaints

More water fountains are coming — and seats, too — after the new Calgary International Airport fell short for many travellers.

On Monday, Calgary Airport Authority CEO Robert Sartor told city councillors at an annual update that they heard many positives about the terminal in their soft launch.

Airline partners were happy to test drive the terminal, operations were ready, and the white hat volunteers worked to help passengers in the unfamiliar space.

Although some complaints fell to third-party services within the airport, including security screening, Sartor admitted they fell short on some aspects within their control.

"We had very little access to water in the new terminal, and that was an oversight, frankly," Sartor said.

"You know what, we're putting that in."

What was meant to be a European-style "call to gate" system wasn't sitting well with Calgarians, who Sartor said couldn't find enough seats. So, they're adding chairs.

And concerns about the shuttle system and connectivity were also addressed with some more fine-tuning.

"We want to give the International terminal a better sense of place," Sartor said. "We've got a lot of wide open spaces, a lot of white spaces and when people walk out of the gangway and out of the terminal we want to them to go 'wow.'"

He said he wants to get the new terminal to a point where it interacts with users in a digital sense, welcoming people in their own language and showing them what Calgary is all about.

"We should be the welcome mat with open arms... that warm goodbye when they leave," he said.

HELEN PIKE/METRO

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Details ahead on new social services program

BUDGET

Infrastructure bank could bring in billions of dollars in funds

A new infrastructure bank could free up billions in new money for social services Canadians regularly use, internal government documents say — provided the experimental new institution meets its lofty financing goals.

The presentation, prepared for the economic growth council that's advising Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his cabinet, shows transit and water projects going through the bank could mean more federal dollars for social infrastructure like child care, recreational facilities and seniors' centres.

Funding for social infrastructure projects, which tend to be less attractive to private investors, could increase by one-third if the bank meets its target of leveraging $4 in private investment for every $1 from the federal government, the documents indicate.

Those documents, obtained under the Access to Information Act, demonstrate the Liberal government's thinking on how money from its long-term infrastructure program could help them meet their economic and political goals.

The program's three streams — social, transit and so-called "green" infrastructure — are worth almost $69.1 billion in new funding over the next 10 years.

Much of the political intrigue ahead of Finance Minister Bill Morneau's second federal budget Wednesday has been removed. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Wednesday's budget will unveil more details of how the money will flow and where the funding for the bank will come from, say sources who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Concerns have persisted that the funding would be diverted away from money earmarked to cities and provinces.

The government has argued the promised infrastructure money remains available even if it is delivered through the bank, which cities and provinces will have the option of using.

More details about the bank itself will come in the weeks and months to follow once cabinet has approved tabling the legislation that will create the institution, the sources said.

The Liberals plan to finance the bank with $35 billion — $15 billion of it in cash — to backstop projects and attract private investment for those that can generate revenue through transit fares, water rates or road tolls.

The hope is that the federal money will generate $140 billion in private investment, particularly from pension plans looking for steady, predictable returns that will also keep up with inflation.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Trudeau replicas turned up at an event last June organized by the Canadian consulate in Atlanta and earlier this month at a Canadian music festival in Austin, Tex. TWITTER.COM

Cut it out: Cardboard Trudeaus get banned

Justin Trudeau may still be a big draw on the international circuit, but his cardboard stand-ins have fallen flat.

Global Affairs has instructed diplomatic missions in the U.S. to stop using life-size cardboard cut-outs of the prime minister to promote Canada. The order follows the revelation last week that prime ministerial replicas turned up at an event last June organized by the Canadian consulate in Atlanta and earlier this month at a Canadian music festival in Austin, Tex.

The Canadian embassy in Washington also rush-ordered a cut-out of its own for use at Canada Day celebrations last year, at a cost of $147.79, including $72.80 for next-day delivery.

The embassy has not explained whether the cardboard Trudeau was ever actually used.

Regardless, it will now have to go into storage.

"We are aware of instances where our missions in the United States had decided to purchase and use these cut-outs," Global Affairs spokeswoman Natasha Nystrom said in an email. It's not clear if the missions ever had departmental permission to use the cardboard cut-outs.

According to emails obtained by the Conservatives through the Access to Information Act, the Washington embassy's interest in using a cardboard likeness was sparked by word that the Atlanta consulate had put one on display at a pre-Canada Day event last year.

Asked if Ottawa had given permission, Louise Blais, the Atlanta consul general, advised the embassy that she did ask but "never got an answer."

Anna Gibbs, senior events production manager at the Washington embassy, was excited about the prospect of putting Trudeau's image on display.

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AFRICA 27 MILLION LACK ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER A girl washes her legs at a water point four kilometres from her home in Aweil, South Sudan. As World Water Day approaches on March 22, nearly 27 million people do not have access to clean water in Somalia, South Sudan, northeastern Nigeria and Yemen. MACKENZIE KNOWLES-COURSIN/UNICEF/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ADVOCACY

Human rights group to address Trump

A pan-American commission will hold an emergency hearing in Washington to investigate the impact of U.S. President Donald Trump's executive orders on human rights in the country.

Tuesday's hearing by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights was prompted by the requests from advocates in Canada and the U.S. to review what they called "deteriorating" conditions faced by asylum seekers and other migrants under the Trump administration.

These groups have asked the commission to make findings that Trump's travel ban against six Muslim-majority countries, which has been temporarily blocked by judges, and his expansion of detention and deportation against migrants violate U.S. human rights obligations. Some of the groups hope the human rights body will rule the U.S. is not safe for refugees and recommend the suspension of the Canada-U.S. Safe Third Country Agreement.

"The expedited removals and expansion of detention under the orders are going to have profound implications on the U.S. asylum system," said Efrat Arbel, a University of British Columbia law professor who co-authored, with the Harvard Immigration and Refugee Clinical Program, a recent review of Trump's executive orders. The commission is part of the Organization of American States, made up of 35 countries, with a mission to promote and protect human rights in the American hemisphere.

Since Trump's executive orders were issued, an increasing number of asylum seekers have risked their lives to cross the border outside of formal ports of entry into Canada in order to skirt the safe country agreement restrictions.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

FBI probing ties to Russia

INVESTIGATION

White House moves to cut links to past associates

It's now been revealed that the FBI had two political bombshells ready to drop during the last U.S. election. One, it unloaded on Democrats two weeks before election day. The other it held onto — until two months into Donald Trump's presidency.

It dropped Monday.

In an announcement that could forever affect history's account of the 2016 election, the FBI announced that it has been investigating possible criminal collusion between the Russian government and associates of the Trump campaign since July.

FBI director James Comey revealed it while testifying to Congress. He's the same FBI director who during the campaign commented publicly about an investigation into Hillary Clinton's emails. The news came in a five-hour hearing that concluded with the Republican committee chair stating the politically obvious: this shadow will linger for a while, creeping over the Trump White House.

"There's a big, grey cloud that you have now put over people who have very important work to do to lead this country."

Comey replied: "I understand."

His revelation fanned a low-level fire crackling for months in the U.S. capital over why the Putin government intervened in the U.S. election; what its motives might have been; and whether the Trump team knew about it.

Late last July, Comey said, the agency began investigating contacts between Trump associates and the Russian government — which is believed to have stolen emails from the Democratic party and leaked them through intermediaries Wikileaks and Guccifer.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

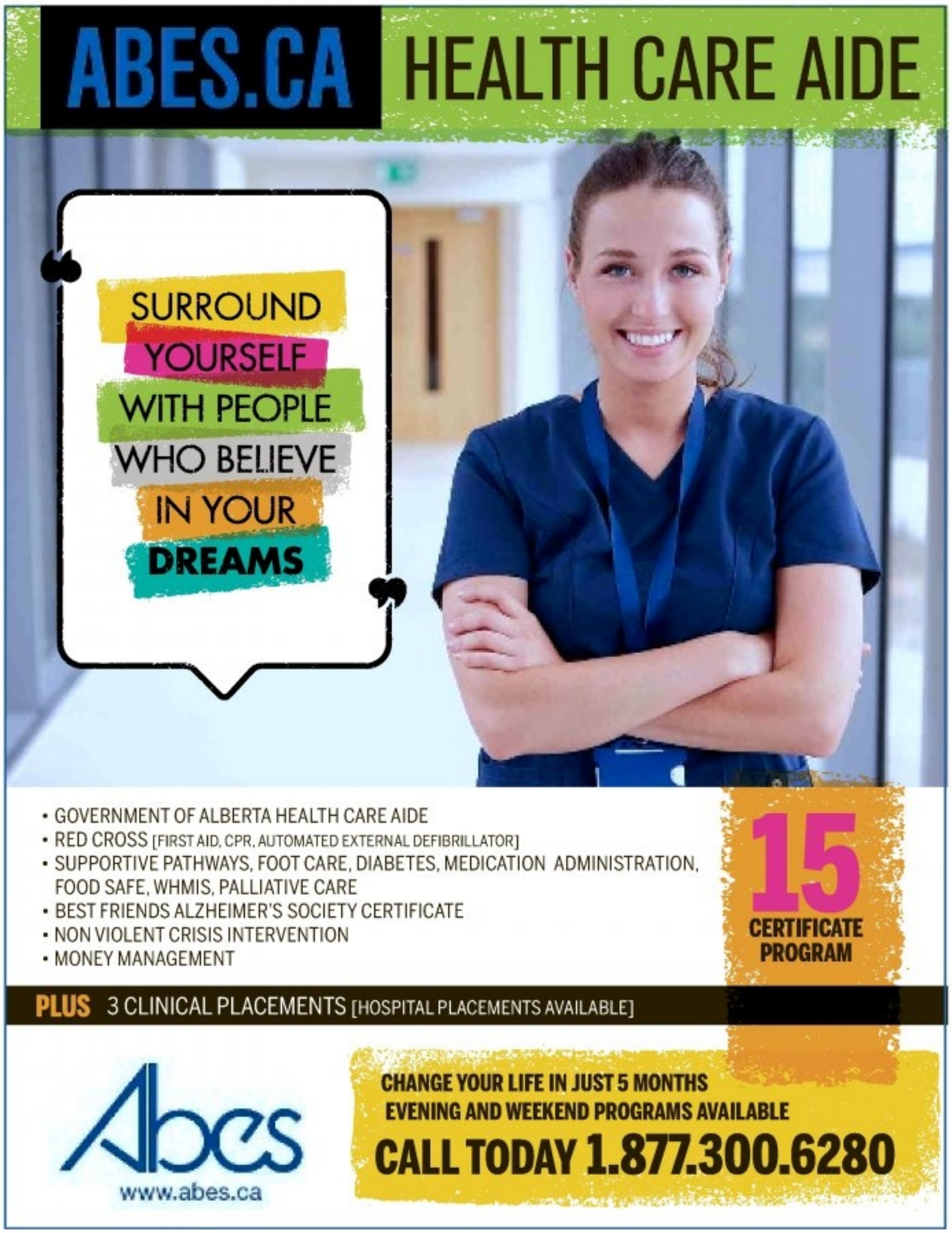
BREXIT

The countdown begins: United Kingdom to start EU exit on March 29

Britain will begin divorce proceedings from the European Union on March 29, starting the clock on two years of intense political and economic negotiations that will fundamentally change both the nation and its European neighbours.

The trigger for all this tumult is the innocuous-sounding Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty, a never-before-used mechanism for withdrawing from the bloc.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS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Kid builds Lego for rent biz

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

Fans can pick from six sets of building blocks

Sarah Hoyles
For Metro | Edmonton

Gavin Gariepy, 10, has started a new business called Rent A Brick, where he rents out expensive sets to fellow Lego fans.
SARAH HOYLES/FOR METRO

A 10-year-old from Edmonton is building a business out of Lego.

Gavin Gariepy is renting out his collection of the toy building blocks as part of a new venture called Rent a Brick.

"Big Lego sets can be very expensive," said Gariepy. "Not everyone can afford the biggest sets, so I thought people should get to try the amazing ones like these."

Currently, Lego enthusiasts can pick from six available sets, including the 2,144-piece Star Wars-themed Assault on Hoth Set which includes the wampa that captures Luke Skywalker, according to the Rent a Brick website.

Gariepy takes rental bookings via text or through his website. Rentals start at $15 and last for seven days, which Gariepy figures provides "more than enough time to build and play with it. Then give it back."

He first got the idea of a Lego rental company last year, but needed capital. So he applied for a $500 grant from a local bank.

Russ Morrow, CEO of River City Credit Union, said his financial institution gives 10 grants to youth aged 8-13 every year as part of a program for young entrepreneurs.

"It helps kids have an entrepreneurial experience," he said.

Gariepy got his startup cash in June 2016, and spent it on building and maintaining a website at rentabrick.ca, as well as printing up business cards. He officially launched his company in January.

Since then, Gariepy has had a handful of renters, mostly kids, but some adults, he said.

Gariepy is planning to reinvest his profits to purchase more Lego sets and expand his inventory.

RESEARCH

Gum new lure for shoppers

Retailers hoping to engage shoppers may want to try handing out bubble gum at the door, according to new research.

In a series of five studies, researchers from Ryerson University's Ted Rogers School of Management in Toronto found that handing out gum to shoppers encouraged them to shop for more items and with a higher level of engagement.

The act of chewing made the shoppers more alert. "If you're more alert, you're more likely to absorb the information that is in the store — the promotional and even the nutritional labels — and have the cognitive function to absorb that information," said Seung Hwan (Mark) Lee, associate professor, retail management at Ryerson.

Although one of the five studies found that people chewing gum as they shopped for groceries were more likely to buy more items, none of the studies made a strong connection between chewing gum and money spent.

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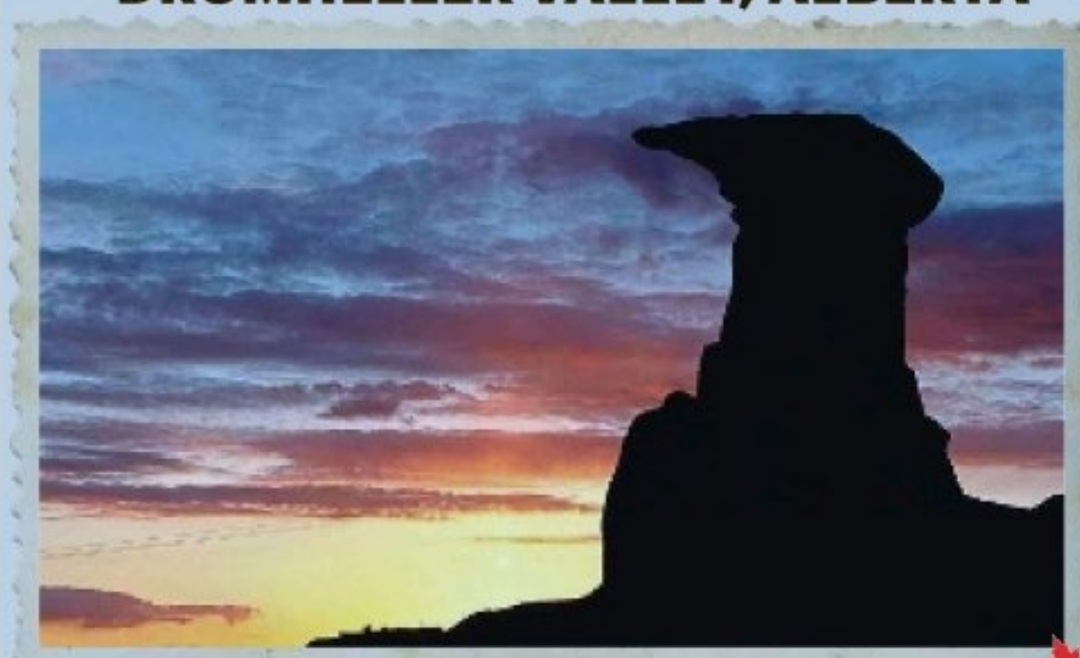

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metro CITIES
Your essential urban intelligence

PHILOSOPHER CAT by Jason Logan

BLUEPRINT by David Hains

KEEPING TRANSIT ON TRACK

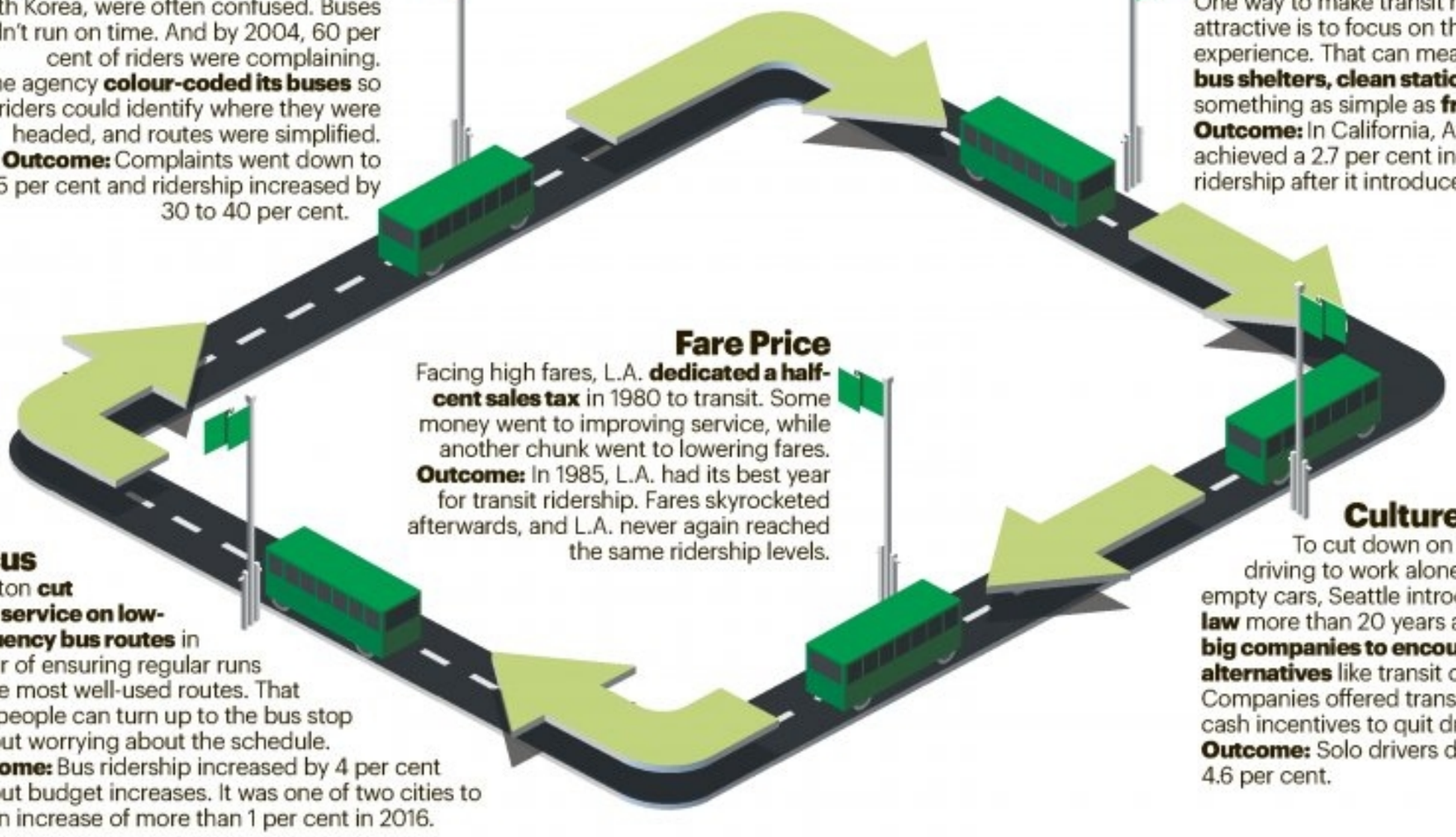
Transit ridership declined across North America in 2016, causing a revenue shortage in dozens of cities. It's tempting for some agencies to consider cutting service or increasing fares to make up the difference. But those moves can cause further declines in ridership, creating a vicious cycle. **Instead, Metro looks at how cities can get on a more virtuous cycle.**

Primary Concerns

With 600 routes, bus riders in Seoul, South Korea, were often confused. Buses didn't run on time. And by 2004, 60 per cent of riders were complaining. The agency **colour-coded its buses** so riders could identify where they were headed, and routes were simplified. **Outcome:** Complaints went down to 15 per cent and ridership increased by 30 to 40 per cent.

Wider Web

One way to make transit more attractive is to focus on the customer experience. That can mean **better bus shelters, clean stations,** or something as simple as **free Wi-Fi**. **Outcome:** In California, Amtrak achieved a 2.7 per cent increase in ridership after it introduced free Wi-Fi.



Fare Price

Facing high fares, L.A. **dedicated a half-cent sales tax** in 1980 to transit. Some money went to improving service, while another chunk went to lowering fares. **Outcome:** In 1985, L.A. had its best year for transit ridership. Fares skyrocketed afterwards, and L.A. never again reached the same ridership levels.

Focus

Houston **cut back service on low-frequency bus routes** in favour of ensuring regular runs on the most well-used routes. That way, people can turn up to the bus stop without worrying about the schedule. **Outcome:** Bus ridership increased by 4 per cent without budget increases. It was one of two cities to see an increase of more than 1 per cent in 2016.

Culture Shock

To cut down on people driving to work alone in mostly-empty cars, Seattle introduced **a law** more than 20 years ago **forcing big companies to encourage alternatives** like transit or carpooling. Companies offered transit passes or cash incentives to quit driving. **Outcome:** Solo drivers declined by 4.6 per cent.

WORD ON THE STREET by Sarah-Joyce Battersby

Popping ballooning budgets on mega infrastructure jobs

Matti Siemiatycki CONTRIBUTED

The federal government is expected to flesh out a plan Wednesday to invest almost $190 billion in infrastructure over the next 12 years.

But will it be enough?

Whether it's Boston's Big Dig, Europe's Chunnel or (insert your local project here), mega projects are rarely on-budget. In fact, they chronically rack up extra costs.

Metro asked Matti Siemiatycki, a planning professor at the University of Toronto, why it happens, and how to fix it.

While mega projects are complex, consistent overruns suggest it's not random, he said. If it was, planners would guess under budget sometimes, which rarely happens.

Instead, one theory goes that someone is lying, either to themself or to others.

Lying to oneself is called optimism bias. It means we imagine best-case scenarios and hope issues can be controlled even as things go off the rails.

Lying to others is what leading scholar Bent Flyvbjerg calls strategic misrepresentation. Large projects sometimes incentivize fudging both the costs and the benefits, like giving overly sunny ridership projections for a transit project, in order to win public and political support.

But Siemiatycki has solutions.

Collect data: Governments should fire up the analytics machine and turn infrastructure planning into a numbers game, collecting stats on mega projects as diligently as baseball teams do for batters.

Change incentives: Reward the best solution, not the cheapest. Data could help here, giving better insight into which builders provide accurate budget and time projections, and put them at the top of the heap for bids.

Budget boot camp: A U.K. program put all civil servants working on projects over a certain cost threshold through a training program to ward off bad planning.

Rope in private dollars: When public projects team up with private enterprise often the same people are responsible for designing, building and maintaining it, so they can't pass the buck or dodge deadlines. Also, the deals generally reward meeting targets along the way.

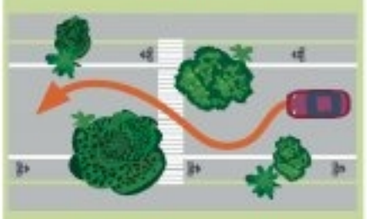
However it's done, fixes need to come soon, said Siemiatycki, who fears public confidence in government is waning "not only to deliver projects, but to use infrastructure to address the major challenges that our communities face."

PUBLIC WORKS
The week in urbanism

Sweden gets all the cool things
A Stockholm architecture firm has proposed a giant, glass egg-shaped indoor park. The idea is to give Stockholmers a green refuge during the long, cold winter months. The warm air for the greenhouse-like facility would come from a nearby underground parking lot.

Walk this way
Dubai has introduced a "smart" pedestrian traffic signal. Using sensors and cameras, it automatically detects the needs of pedestrians (walk time, number of pedestrians) on the sidewalk and in the crosswalk, and adjusts traffic signals accordingly.

URBAN DICTIONARY

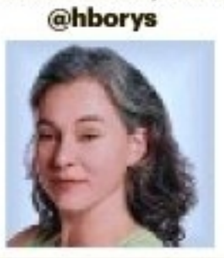


DEFINITION
Woonerf is a Dutch word for streets that give equal priority to drivers, cyclists and pedestrians by placing them all on the same level and reducing driving speeds to walking pace. Also referred to as "home zones."

USE IT IN A SENTENCE
Emma felt safe walking down the neighbourhood **woonerf**, which put her at eye level with motorists.

CITY CHAMP

Hazel Borys is the managing director of PlaceMakers, a planning and consultation firm. Based in Winnipeg, Borys used to love sprawl, but now tweets about zoning, pedestrian issues, and art. **@hborys**



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metro LIFE

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In recount of Paris heist, Kim Kardashian West says she 'mentally prepped' for possible rape

All of this centres on Eurocentric beauty standards, which privilege those who are white or are white adjacent in appearance

Shantel Buggs, PhD candidate in sociology at University of Texas

The structural emasculation of Asian men in all forms of media became a self-fulfilling prophecy that produced an actual abhorrence to Asian men in the real world

TV host Eddie Huang

It's easy to keep yourself in the dark about racism and bias when you are part of the majority, and I seem to have shone a bit of light about this in those spaces

Hadiya Roderique, lawyer

Racism in the dating game

CULTURE

Black women and Asian men the victims of cultural biases

Sofi Papamarko
life@metronews.ca

"I'm open to dating women of all backgrounds," he tells me. "Except for black women."

"I've just never been attracted to Asian men," she says.

Uncomfortable yet? Unfortunately, the vast majority of singles I've worked with have clear racial preferences and biases when it comes to dating. Now that I'm four years into professional matchmaking, I've seen clear patterns emerge when it comes to race and attraction.

White men: congratulations! Women of every racial background seem to strongly prefer dating you. Asian and Latin women are most popular with the gents. Black women and Asian men are the two groups most notably at a dating disadvantage. They are the hardest singles for me to match, because they tend to be excluded from the match searches of the majority of clients.

The online dating world is also stacked against them. According to Christian Rudder's OKCupid blog, stats from 2014 show that 82 per cent of non-black men on OKCupid show some bias against black women. Asian men's profiles are consistently rated the lowest by single women using online dating sites. But why?

"Attractiveness is a very haphazard dish that can't be boiled down to height or skin colour, but Asian men are told that regardless of what the idyllic mirepoix is or isn't, we just don't have the ingredients," television host Eddie Huang recently wrote in the New York Times.

Pop culture is a window into desire. Consider the male Asian characters in movies you've seen in the last several years. When was the last time you saw a North American film where a desirable Asian man played the lead and didn't know martial arts?

A similar story presents itself when we deconstruct black women in popular culture. In film and television, black women are often portrayed as two-dimensional "strong and sassy" stereotypes. When cast as a romantic interest, they're usually played by biracial or multiracial women with lighter skin tones.

"Society tells us that black women are hypersexual but also more masculine than other women, while it suggests that Asian men are less masculine — to the point of being effeminate — and that they are physically less attractive," says Shantel Buggs, a PhD Candidate in Sociology at the University of Texas.

The exclusion of Asian men is a particularly visible problem in the gay community. "No rice, no spice" is the social networking apps Scruff and Grindr parlance for "no East Asian men, no South Asian men." Straight people aren't as upfront about their prejudices, but having spoken to several women of colour about their time online, they seem to get fewer matches than other women and are frequently fetishized when they do connect.

In a recent feature article in the Walrus, lawyer Hadiya Roderique detailed her challenges dating as a woman of colour. When Hadiya photoshopped her dating profile photos so that she appeared to be a white woman, her profile's popularity skyrocketed.

"When you combine demographics, the fact that users disproportionately message others of the same race, fetishism, sexualization of blackness, racism and anti-blackness, it adds up to — to put it mildly — a 'harder time' in those spaces," she said.

So are you racist if you aren't open to dating everyone? I don't know. Are you the product of a racist society? Undoubtedly, yes. We all are. And we're going to have to work hard at being inclusive and open-minded in dating and in every other aspect of life if we're set on making any progress at all. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Knit this into a routine and untie those knots

YOGA

The Twisted Stitcher pose is tailor-made for warming up

YuMee Chung
life@metronews.ca

This week's offering is one of the exercises my granny would do, much to my chagrin, while watching me at the playground.

I use it today as a pre-yoga warm-up to mobilize the spine, relax the shoulders and improve circulation in the hands.

Take note knitters, crocheters and other textile artists: this one is tailor-made for you.

1. Situate yourself in a wide-open space with your feet set shoulder-distance apart and arms hanging slackly by your sides.

2. Rotate your spine to the right as you gaze over the right shoulder and pivot onto your left toes to protect your knees. Then, do the same on the second side.

3. Turn from side-to-side, gaining speed as you go.

4. Curl your hands into loose fists and, moving only with momentum, percussively massage your lower back.

5. Then, bring the hands up to thump the fronts of your shoulders.

6. Finally, gain enough momentum to throw the arms over your shoulders and tenderize your upper back and the corners of your neck for five or more breaths.

7. Decelerate until the body comes to stillness and your arms hang heavy by your sides.

8. Notice the warmth in your hands and the feeling of well-being.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

YuMee Chung is a recovering lawyer who teaches yoga in Toronto. She is on the faculty of several yoga teacher training programs and leads international yoga retreats. Learn more about her at padmani.com.

YuMee demonstrates a Twisted Stitcher. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

PROSTATE DRUGS' DEPRESSION LINK

A common class of medications used to treat urinary symptoms in men with an enlarged prostate does not boost the risk of suicide, but in rare cases can cause depression, a study has found.

Researchers investigating the potential adverse effects of finasteride and dutasteride after Health Canada issued a warning about a possible link between the drugs and suicidal behaviour. These drugs, known as 5-alpha reductase inhibitors, or 5ARIs, work by shrinking the prostate.

"Our study shows that 5-alpha reductase inhibitors do not lead to an increased risk of suicide," said Dr. Blayne Welk, a urologist at Western University in London, Ont., who led the study. "However, it is concerning that we found a small but significant increase in the risk of self-harm and depression."

Researchers analyzed 2003-13 health data from the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences for 186,000 men over age 65 with an enlarged prostate, half of whom were being treated with finasteride or dutasteride and half of whom had not been prescribed either of the drugs.

Among the men who took one of the medications, there were 38 deaths from suicide: 16 of them were taking finasteride and 22 were on dutasteride. But in the group that was not prescribed one of the 5ARI medications, 36 also took their own lives. THE CANADIAN PRESS

RANKING

Happiness is not all about money: study

We're happy...just a little less happy than usual.

That's the main Canadian takeaway from the World Happiness Report where the country dropped to its lowest-ever ranking, coming in at seventh place, having usually occupied fifth or sixth on the list.

Norway is now the happiest country on Earth, Americans are getting sadder, and it takes more than just money to be happy were the other primary findings.

Norway vaulted to the top slot despite the plummeting price of oil, a key part of its economy. Income in the U.S. has gone up over the past decade, but happiness is declining. The U.S. was 14th, down from No. 13 last year.

7

Canada dropped from sixth place to seventh in the new World Happiness Index.

"It's the human things that matter. If the riches make it harder to have frequent and trustworthy relationship between people, is it worth it?" asked John Helliwell, the lead author of the report and an economist at the University of British Columbia. "The material can stand in the way of the human."

Norway moved from No. 4 to the top spot in the report's rankings, which combine economic, health and polling data compiled by economists that are averaged over three years from 2014 to 2016. Norway edged past previous champ Denmark, which fell to second. Iceland, Switzerland and Finland round out the top 5.

"Good for them. I don't think Denmark has a monopoly on happiness," said Meik Wiking, chief executive officer of the Happiness Research Institute in Copenhagen, who wasn't part of the global scientific study that came out with the rankings.

"What works in the Nordic countries is a sense of community and understanding in the common good," Wiking said.

Still, you have to have some money to be happy, which is why most of the bottom countries are in desperate poverty. But at a certain point extra money doesn't buy extra happiness, Helliwell and others said.

Central African Republic fell to last on the happiness list, and is joined at the bottom by Burundi, Tanzania, Syria and Rwanda.

The report ranks 155 countries. The economists have been ranking countries since 2012, but the data used goes back farther so the economists can judge trends.

The rankings are based on gross domestic product per person, healthy life expectancy with four factors from global surveys. In those surveys, people give scores from 1 to 10 on how much social support they feel they have if something goes wrong, their freedom to make their own life choices, their sense of how corrupt their society is and how generous they are.

Study co-author and economist Jeffrey Sachs of Columbia University said in a phone interview from Oslo that the sense of community, so strong in Norway, is deteriorating in the United States.

"We're becoming more and more mean spirited. And our government is becoming more and more corrupt. And inequality is rising," Sachs said, citing research and analysis he conducted on America's declining happiness for the report. "It's a long-term trend and conditions are getting worse."

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Nicole Fernandez. Graduate.

Not just for gamers: It's VR in the ER

TECHNOLOGY

Doctors adopt virtual reality to put patients' minds at ease

Jonathan Forani
life@metronews.ca

Patient Tess Baird uses a VR headset while Dr. Ben O'Sullivan looks on as part of a project to ease pre-surgery anxiety. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

When 9-year-old Tess Baird landed at Sick Kids for surgery on a badly broken finger she was terrified."The big lights, all the big machines. I was really scared," she said.

To put her mind at ease, hospital staff gave her a virtual reality headset — futuristic-looking goggles with a 360-degree video screen — that detailed the impending procedure from a patient's perspective.

The frightened Brampton girl experienced a blow by blow of what to expect from the moment she'd be greeted by nursing staff, to being wheeled through the halls on a gurney, receiving anesthetic and falling into a fog, to finally waking up when it was over.

When she underwent the surgery 30 minutes later, she was no longer scared.

"Let's say I had 10 nerves. Nine of them were gone," said Tess, who broke her finger while roughhousing with her brother.

Virtual reality isn't just for gamers anymore. Toronto anesthesiologists Fahad Alam and Clyde Matava are using immersive reality in health care in the only such lab in Canada called the Collaborative Human Immersive and Interactive Lab (CHISIL).

They have tested the technology on more than 200 patients including Tess at The Hospital for Sick Children and Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. "We're taking (VR) out of the gaming realm, and actually using it to help patients and changing care," said Alam. With the immersive experience, "the fear of unknown is kind of eliminated."

Doctors are now analyzing the data and the results have been encouraging. There have been no episodes of "VR sickness" (headaches and nausea similar to motion sickness) and any fear prior to surgery has decreased. They found that nearly all the children at Sick Kids preferred the VR over traditional PowerPoint slides to explain the surgery process. One hundred parents of patients, including Tess's mom Kristen Wall, also tried the technology.

> **Let's say I had 10 nerves. Nine of them were gone.**
> Tess Baird, patient

"There's nothing more frightening as a parent than having one of your children sick or broken," said Wall, who found it eased her nerves as well.

"I watched (Tess) go from nervous and frightened to more armed with information."

Preoperative anxiety doesn't just affect children. It is a significant problem across all ages.

"Up to 80 per cent of patients coming for any type of surgery can be suffering from some form of preoperation anxiety," said Alam. That anxiety can result in pain and increased anesthetic requirements. The unease doesn't just dissipate after surgery, it can delay recovery.

The VR could replace current less effective methods of stress relief including cartoon drawings, photographs and standard 2D video by allowing patients to "pre-experience the environment" in a gamelike way.

For Laura Victoria-Perez, 41, who suffers from social anxiety, the pre-surgery VR experience was ideal. "It feels like you're inside a video game," said Victoria-Perez, who had surgery in November. "If at my age I was afraid, I can only imagine how it scares some kids before a surgery."

Virtual reality is most often associated with pricey brands like Occulus Rift and PlayStation VR, which cost upwards of $500. At Toronto's CHISIL lab, Matava and Alam have kept their costs in check using Google Cardboard, which is mounted to a smartphone rather than using its own screen. At $5-$15 per headset it is among the most inexpensive of VR options. The Sick Kids and Sunnybrook doctors hope that the technology will also be helpful for training health workers.

For Tess, the virtual reality prelude was a success. "Don't worry," is her post-op advice. "It's not going to be as scary as you think." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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INCLUSION

Why Muppet with autism is the newest arrival on Sesame Street

Julia, a new autistic muppet character, debuts on April 10. AP

Folks on Sesame Street have a way of making everyone feel accepted.

That certainly goes for Julia, a Muppet youngster with blazing red hair, bright green eyes — and autism. Rather than being treated like an outsider, which too often is the plight of kids on the spectrum, Julia is one of the gang.

Look: On this friendliest of streets (actually Studio J at New York's Kaufman Astoria Studios, where Sesame Street lives) Julia is about to play a game with Oscar, Abby and Grover. In this scene being taped for airing next season, these Muppet chums have been challenged to spot objects shaped like squares or circles or triangles.

"You're lucky," says Abby to Grover. "You have Julia on your team, and she is really good at finding shapes!"

With that, they skedaddle, an exit that calls for the six Muppeteers squatted out of sight below them to scramble accordingly. Joining her pals, Julia takes off hunting.

For more than a year, Julia has existed in print and digital illustrations as the centerpiece of a multifaceted initiative by Sesame Workshop called Sesame Street and Autism: See Amazing in All Children.

She has been the subject of a storybook released along with videos, e-books, an app and website. The goal is to promote a better understanding of what the Autism Speaks advocacy group describes as "a range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviours, speech and nonverbal communication, as well as by unique strengths and differences."

But now Julia has been brought to life in fine Muppet fettle. She makes her TV debut on Sesame Street in the Meet Julia episode airing April 10.

Developing Julia and all the other components of this campaign has required years of consultation with organizations, experts and families within the autism community, according to Jeanette Betancourt, Sesame Workshop's senior vice-president of U.S. Social Impact.

"In the U.S., one in 68 children is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder," she says. "We wanted to promote a better understanding and reduce the stigma often found around these children. We're modeling the way both children and adults can look at autism from a strength-based perspective: finding things that all children share." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dig deeper before mocking pet parents

ANIMALS

Furry friends see humans through very tough times

It's easy to jump directly to "crazy cat lady" or poke fun at "stay-at-home dog moms" when describing intense relationships between humans and their pets.

But for some who spend the bulk of each day with their animals, it's more like a two-way healing labour of love.

Amy Hunter, 51, stayed home in Indiana with her three kids when they were little. Years later, she took a work-from-home job after the death of her son, Jake, piled on the loss of another son who had earlier drowned.

Now her daughter is about to graduate from college and Hunter is home full time with two dogs, a brown mix rescue named Apollo, who weighs in at about 90 pounds, and a black Labrador retriever, Rubi.

"I've become very, very, very in tune with them," said Hunter, who lives in Indianapolis. "We got Rubi as a puppy after my first son died. She's been my emotional saviour."

Her husband works outside the home, as a plant manager, so it's just mom and dogs during the day.

"After my second son died I cried a lot. I was anxiety ridden," Hunter explained. "What I found was how much I could communicate with my dogs."

Coleen Balent, 43, understands.

She stays home with her two kids, ages 10 and 8, as her husband works as a computer network engineer for U.S. Navy hospitals outside their home. They've been stationed around the world and have been in the U.S. island territory of Guam, in the western Pacific, for nearly a year.

Rounding out the family are three rescue dogs, including one, 13-year-old Paolo, who has serious health issues. She and her husband found him years ago in Sicily, in a boat yard with his mouth taped shut. He had been hit by a car.

"The vet told me he wouldn't make it through the night. I took him home with antibiotics and a nebulizer and he survived," Balent recalled. "Several years later, Paolo broke his back while we were living in Charleston, South Carolina."

John and Amy Hunter are childless by choice and Amy is a stay-at-home pet mom. AP

The accident left him paralyzed, but after $6,000 in surgery and three months of rehabilitation, he can hobble along, requiring help going up and down stairs and on and off beds. Three years ago, Paolo was diagnosed with diabetes so Balent injects him with insulin twice a day, checking his glucose levels often.

"We can barely afford it, and it's a pain," she said. "I can never go anywhere for the day. I'm quite sure everyone thinks I'm crazy. Some people have flat out told me, but Paolo has seen me through two pregnancies, two severe postpartum depressions, an autoimmune disease and three moves to three different countries and continents."

For Hunter, each pet enriches her in different ways. Her black lab got her off the coach. "She gets me moving, she gets me going. There's no sitting anymore." She even feels her long hours alone with the two have heightened their ability to communicate.

It's Apollo who tells her when it's time for breakfast. He's the vocal one. Both dogs comprehend about 250 of her words. Apollo can differentiate between ball, stick and his favourite toy, a Teddy bear.

"And they know what shoes I wear. If I put on running shoes, they're staying home. They don't move. If I put on just normal tennis shoes, we're walking and they go find their leashes. If I put on boots or dress shoes or something, they're not going. They know this. It's so funny," Hunter said. "I'm not the crazy dog lady. I know they're not my children, but I just feel very close to them."

Stay-at-home writer Kat Faitour, who lives near Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is not a "crazy" dog mom. She's a "crazy" cat mom.

Faitour worked in the health care industry for more than 20 years, including her last five in a complaint department.

"It was draining. The negativity finally got to me," she said. "In the midst of that, my mom became ill and passed away from ovarian cancer in 2013. I didn't have much to give after my mother died and my husband was super encouraging me to stay home and write."

With her all day, every day, Faitour said, are "my boys," two nearly 8-year-old cats, including one with "100 health problems." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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YouTubers hit out at 'restricted' filter

SOCIAL MEDIA

Tegan and Sara lead calls to lift block on gay, trans content

A chorus of Canadian LGBTQ YouTubers, including pop duo Tegan and Sara, is calling for the video service to stop filtering out gay and trans-themed videos for some users.

The Calgary-raised sisters took to social media to question why YouTube's "restricted" setting blocks a wide variety of LGBTQ-friendly content for no clear reason.

"If you put YouTube on restricted mode a bunch of our music videos disappear. I checked myself. LGBTQ people shouldn't be restricted. SAD!" Tegan and Sara (below) tweeted. Among the missing clips were videos from their latest album, including for "That Girl" and "U-turn."

They were joined by Halifax singer Ria Mae, who said her video for Gold, which features the singer in a lesbian relationship, was also being filtered out.

"Young gay kids need to see themselves represented and they need to know it's normal, it's OK and it's not X-rated," Mae said in a video on her Instagram account.

"It sends a bad message to young gay kids and young trans kids that their lives are not normal or acceptable."

At issue is YouTube's "restricted" designation, which lets parents, schools and libraries filter content that may be considered inappropriate for users under 18. YouTube calls it "an optional feature used by a very small subset of users."

What's unclear is whether the types of videos in question are being labelled as "restricted" for the first time, or if this has been an ongoing practice that's only recently gained attention.

Video producer Michael Rizzi, who's based in Toronto, says he's concerned with the message it sends to loyal YouTube users. He's seen 176 of his 236 videos disappear in "restricted" mode, representing 75 per cent of the clips he's uploaded over the past five years.

"It's more a feeling of being pushed to the side," Rizzi says. "It's a pretty big screw-up on their end."

In an emailed statement on Monday, YouTube acknowledged the filter saying "some videos that cover subjects like health, politics and sexuality may not appear for users and institutions that choose to use this feature."

YouTube added later that "some videos are incorrectly labelled by our automated system and we realize it's very important to get this right."

"We're working hard to make some improvements," the company said without offering further details.

The lack of information has left YouTubers struggling to determine what's being sifted out, what isn't and why it's happening.

Rizzi suspects video tags like "LGBT" or "gay couple" may be triggering the filter for 7 Things I Love About My Boyfriend, a video he says shouldn't be restricted for a younger audience.

Even his clip commissioned for YouTube's #ProudToBe campaign, timed to last year's Pride Month, is now filtered out.

"YouTube's own equality campaign is restricted, which is probably the weirdest part of everything," Rizzi says.

Fellow YouTuber Stef Sanjati has seen about 20 per cent of her content - or 49 videos - filtered in the site's "restricted" mode. She says the filter is hiding clips of her talking about transgender student bathrooms and makeup tutorials.

She hasn't been able to figure out which keywords tagged to her videos might trigger the filter.

"The execution is so off the mark," she says.

"It's not about clicks and view counts. It's about these resources being available for young people who would otherwise have no access to them."

Sanjati vented her frustrations in a 10-minute YouTube video that's been viewed more than 33,000 times. She hopes by speaking out, YouTube executives will understand how they've negatively impacted a loyal segment of their users.

"Restricting (these videos) is sending a message that we should discriminate against these people," Sanjati says.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Calgary sisters Tegan and Sara joined the backlash against YouTube's filter. THE CANADIAN PRESS

JOHANNA SCHNELLER WHAT I'M WATCHING

Underfed and vulnerable, Anne's resolve is unwavering

THE SHOW: Anne, Season 1, Episodes 1 & 2 (CBC)
THE MOMENT: The stump

Siblings Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert (R.H. Thomson and Geraldine James, both perfect) wanted to adopt a boy to help work their Prince Edward Island farm. Instead they got Anne (Amybeth McNulty, also perfect) an exuberant, redheaded orphan tween whose imagination outweighs her underfed frame. Matthew fell for her, but Marilla, more practical, thinks Anne should return to the orphanage.

"Couldn't I do the farm chores even though I'm a girl?" Anne asks.

"That's not the way of things and you know it," Marilla replies.

"But couldn't I?" Anne persists. "I'm as strong as a boy, and I prefer to be outdoors."

Marilla's resolve wavers. "Do you consider yourself to be delicate and incapable?" Anne asks. "Because I don't."

That's the text of this Anne reboot, from creator Moira Walley-Beckett, who went from writing Breaking Bad to creating the backstage-at-the-ballet drama Flesh and Bone to Green Gables.

But Walley-Beckett also gives us subtext. Reading between the novel's lines and adding verisimilitude, she gives us quick but potent glimpses of the miseries many orphans faced in 1890s Imperialist culture.

As Anne makes her case to Marilla, we recall two flashes we've just seen: Anne, alone in a room in an orphan asylum, with two men moving in on her as the door swings shut. And Anne, in indentured servitude to a family with too many children, bent over a stump, skirts lifted, being beaten by a drunk man.

She doesn't tell Marilla why she so desperately needs to stay. But Walley-Beckett makes sure we see it.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears on CBC Radio's Q.

Amybeth McNulty is perfect as Anne. CONTRIBUTED

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metro SPORTS

Police say Tom Brady's missing Super bowl jersey has been found in 'possession of a credentialed member of the international media' in Mexico

KHALIL HAMRA/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A game of their own

MIDDLE EAST

Baseball draws new players in Palestinian women

The young Palestinian women don baseball caps on top of their Islamic headscarves and field tennis balls with fabric gloves, giving a decidedly local feel to the great American pastime.

They are trying to bring baseball to the Gaza Strip, an effort that is still in its early innings.

The players, who work out on a small soccer pitch in a southern Gaza town, admit they are still trying to understand the rules of the complicated sport. With pitches lobbed underhand, the game they play is closer to softball.

"I only know it through TV," said Valentina Shaer, a 23-year-old English literature student.

Mahmoud Tafesh, the team's coach, said he has dreamed of bringing baseball to Gaza since he was introduced to the game last year.

Although baseball is a fringe sport throughout the soccer-crazy Middle East, the game has grown in popularity. Iraq has a national team, and one of the country's coaches introduced Tafesh to baseball last year while both were in Egypt, which now boasts a baseball and softball federation.

Young women are adding a local flair to baseball in the southern Gaza Strip. KHALIL HAMRA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tafesh admits he still has much to learn. He is unfamiliar with any of the teams or players in Major League Baseball and gets most of his knowledge from YouTube videos.

When he returned to Gaza, he was concerned about the lack of equipment and whether the conservative society, which is governed by the Islamic militant group Hamas, would accept the idea of girls playing the sport.

> **All of us share the same goal: participate and represent the name of Palestine.**
> Iman Mughaier

He first approached girls at the only sports education college in Gaza. To his surprise, he found interest in baseball was stronger among girls than boys, and the sport is now "attracting girls from other fields such as journalism and accountants."

The women say their families had no objection, and some parents even encouraged them. But the society overall has not been as receptive.

Shaer said people "on social media had a bad idea about us," noting abusive comments when their pictures first appeared.

On Sunday, the team, which includes 20 to 30 members, had its weekly practice on a soccer pitch in the female section of Al-Aqsa University.

During batting practice, the hitters took wild swings, often missing but occasionally making solid contact.

The players wore headscarves as well as long-sleeve running tops and loose pants, in keeping with local norms.

"While we face difficulties, we would like a specialized softball field to learn it correctly and train freely without any obstacles," said Iman Shahin, an athlete who studies sports education.

Israel and Egypt imposed a blockade on Gaza after Hamas seized power in 2007, heavily restricting travel and trade, and making it difficult to acquire specialized sports equipment.

Tafesh said he found just one baseball glove in all of Gaza, at the Sports Ministry building, and took it to local tailors who used it to make replicas out of black fabric.

With no proper bats in the territory, the team took a piece of wood and shaped it to look like one.

While seeking funding and real equipment, the women dream of eventually competing abroad.

"All of us share the same goal: participate and represent the name of Palestine outside and show that there are sports for the girls in Gaza," said 24-year-old Iman Mughaier.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CURLING

Homan knocks off Swiss powerhouse

Rachel Homan and her Canada rink gave themselves a major confidence boost Monday in their quest for gold at the women's world curling championship, handing Switzerland its first loss and taking sole possession of first place in the round-robin standings.

Canada improved to 5-0 with an 8-6 win over the Swiss rink skipped by Alina Paetz, a two-time world champion. The Canadians opened the day with a 7-5 win over the United States.

Homan is looking to lead Canada to its first world title since 2008 while Swiss teams have won the last three gold medals.

It was more than just a routine round-robin win for Canada, said second Joanne Courtney.

Joanne Courtney
THE CANADIAN PRESS

"Absolutely," she said. "I think the Swiss are very strong at the worlds, and you can see that in their previous championships. So we take them very seriously. We always have a good game with them."

The loss dropped the Swiss into a second-place tie with Sweden at 4-1. The Czechs and Scotland are tied for fourth at 3-2.

The Canadian squad started the tournament with victories over China, Germany and Russia. THE CANADIAN PRESS

PAY EQUITY

USA Hockey, women's team hopeful for deal

USA Hockey and the women's national team say their marathon meeting Monday was productive and they hope to have an agreement this week that will end their ongoing wage dispute and avoid a boycott of the upcoming world championships.

The sides met for more than 10 hours Monday in Philadelphia and will continue discussions later this week. Players announced last week they'd boycott the upcoming world championships in Plymouth, Mich., unless significant progress was made toward a labour agreement.

USA Hockey and players released statements Monday night saying they hoped a deal would be reached in time for the tournament, which begins March 31.

Players said they were hopeful to get an agreement in time to have a training camp and prepare to defend their world championship gold medal on home ice.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BASEBALL IN BRIEF

Yankees' Gregorius out of WBC with shoulder injury

New York Yankees shortstop Didi Gregorius has a bruised right shoulder, ending his time at the World Baseball Classic and leaving his status for opening day in doubt.

Yankees manager Joe Girardi didn't put a timetable on a return, only saying, "He's going to be sidelined for a bit."

The Yankees start the regular season April 2 at Tampa Bay.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Donaldson makes his Blue Jays spring debut

Toronto Blue Jays star Josh Donaldson made his spring training debut Monday, going 0-for-2 with a walk in his first game since injuring his right calf more than a month ago.

The 2015 AL MVP hurt himself Feb. 17 while running sprints. He was the designated hitter in an 8-2 loss to Minnesota, and is scheduled to play at third base Wednesday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL

Flames' Tkachuk gets 2-game ban

Matthew Tkachuk GETTY IMAGES

Calgary Flames forward Matthew Tkachuk was suspended for two games by the NHL for elbowing Los Angeles Kings defenceman Drew Doughty.

Tkachuk will miss Calgary's upcoming games Tuesday at the Washington Capitals and Thursday at the Nashville Predators. The NHL's department of player safety announced the suspension Monday night.

The play occurred late in the first period of Sunday's game between the Flames and Kings.

Tkachuk was behind L.A.'s net when the puck rimmed around the boards toward him.

Doughty moved from in front of the net to try and get to the puck before Tkachuk, but the Calgary forward preemptively threw his elbow up and into the jaw of the Kings' defenceman.

In a video posted to the NHL's website, the league pointed out that players who possess the puck may initiate contact with their opponents, including with their elbow, but hitting a player the face is never allowed.

The 19-year-old Tkachuk will forfeit $10,277.78 US under the terms of the collective bargaining agreement, based on his average annual salary. The money goes to the Players' Emergency Assistance Fund.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Cowboys re-sign QB Moore

The Dallas Cowboys have re-signed backup pivot Kellen Moore. Before Moore broke his ankle in the first week of training camp last year and missed the entire season, he had been expected to back up Tony Romo.

When Moore was hurt, rookie quarterback Dak Prescott got his chance after Romo got hurt in his first pre-season game. Prescott became the starter and helped lead the Cowboys to the NFC East title.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Warriors ease past Thunder

Klay Thompson scored 34 points to help the Golden State Warriors beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 111-95 on Monday night in a heated matchup filled with trash talking, physical play and technical fouls.

Oklahoma City's Russell Westbrook and Golden State's Draymond Green also got technical for their roles in the skirmish.

The Warriors controlled the game, leading by as many as 27 points.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hart-racing shift

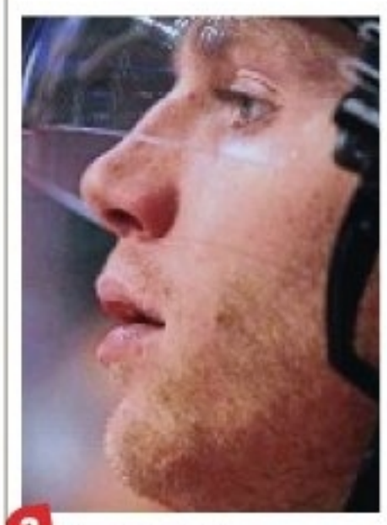
Sidney Crosby and Connor McDavid looked to be running away from the pack in the Hart Trophy race at mid-season but, since then, a flood of worthy contenders has emerged. Here is a look at the now crowded field:

1 Sidney Crosby

He's No. 1 in points-per-game and clinched his first 40-goal season since 2009-10. He's right there in the thick of the race for the Rocket Richard and Art Ross trophies despite a nearly two-week absence to start the season.

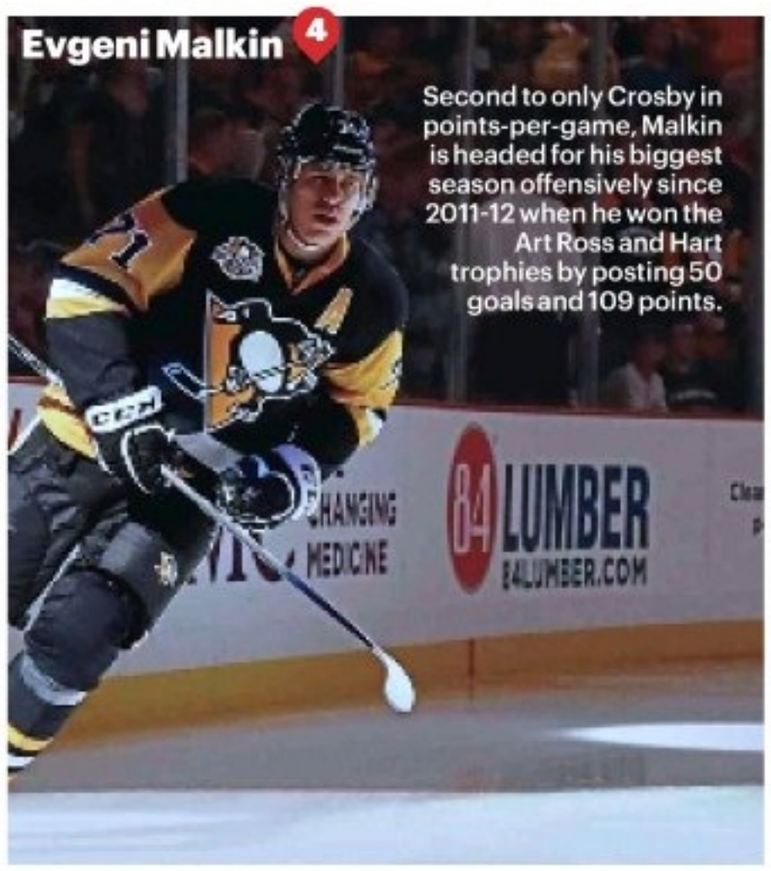
2 Connor McDavid

He's only 20, in his second NHL season and already an MVP candidate. The Oilers' captain has had a hand in almost 40 per cent of his club's offence, leads the NHL in assists and is a favourite to win the scoring title.



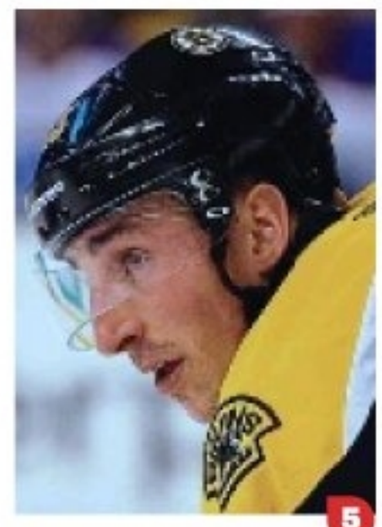
3 Patrick Kane

He's not producing at last year's MVP pace — 46 goals and 106 points — but has been pretty close to it in the past couple months, collecting 20 goals and 30 points since Feb. 1. The NHL hasn't had a repeat MVP winner since Alex Ovechkin (2008, 2009).



4 Evgeni Malkin

Second to only Crosby in points-per-game, Malkin is headed for his biggest season offensively since 2011-12 when he won the Art Ross and Hart trophies by posting 50 goals and 109 points.



5 Brad Marchand

No one had more goals or points since the beginning of December heading into Monday's action, making the 28-year-old from Hammonds Plains a viable threat to win both the Art Ross and Rocket Richard.

THE CANADIAN PRESS/ PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

6 Brent Burns

Burns is tracking toward one of the more electric seasons from a defenceman ever. He has an outside shot at joining Paul Coffey, Bobby Orr, Ray Bourque, Denis Potvin and Doug Wilson (his GM in San Jose) as the only blue-liners to crack 30 goals and 80 points.

7 Erik Karlsson

Ottawa's captain is tiptoeing back into the Hart race with maybe the most well-rounded season of his career. Karlsson is pretty close to a point-per-game again despite a drop in ice-time while leading the league in blocked shots.

MAKE IT TODAY

Well-formed Tuna Wrap

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

Avoid the siren call of the food court and whip up your own healthy, delicious lunch. Not today, chilli fries!

Ready in 10 minutes
Prep time: 5 minutes
Serves 2

Ingredients
- 1 can tuna, packed in water (5 oz)
- 1 stem of celery, chopped fine
- 3 or 4 cherry tomatoes, chopped
- 1 or 2 Tbsp mayonnaise
- 2 tortillas
- 1 carrot, grated
- 1/2 avocado, sliced

Directions

1. In a bowl, mix tuna, celery, tomatoes and mayonnaise.

2. Lay your tortillas on a work surface. Spoon a stripe of tuna mixture down the middle of each tortilla. Now lay down a strip of the grated carrot, right next to the tuna. Place slices of avocado right next to the carrot.

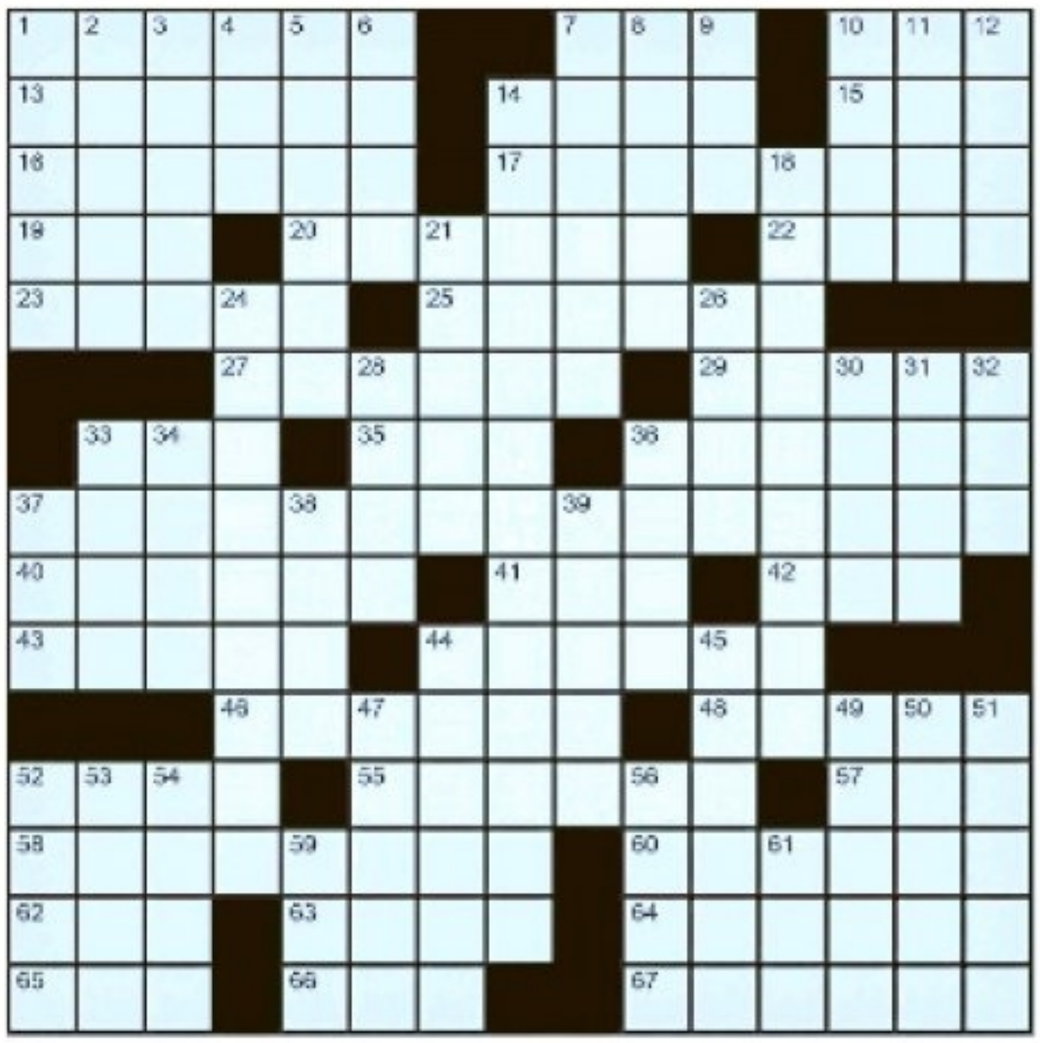
3. Wrap one side of the tortilla over the other. Now tuck in the sides and keep rolling so everything is snuggly inside.

4. Slice the tortilla in half and serves with a side of mixed greens.

FOR MORE MEAL IDEAS, VISIT SWEETPOTATOCHRONICLES.COM

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. North West Mounted Police officer, Sam __ (b.1849 - d.1919)
7. Undergarment, e.g.
10. Canadian restaurant chain, The __ Steakhouse + Bar
13. Pondered
14. __ lily
15. Brick wall's greenery
16. Checking out a website
17. Naysayer
19. Pad __ Mao (Rice noodles dish)
20. Garden statues
22. Via, in verse
23. Accounting firm, __ & Young
25. Most abundant
27. Peoples' possessive pronouns
29. Entice
33. Neither here __ there
35. "The Crying Game" (1992) actor Stephen
36. More blood-and-guts-ish
37. Canadian magician Doug Henning was this political group's candidate (in the Rosedale riding of Toronto) in the 1993 federal election: 3 wds.
40. Unchanged: 3 wds.
41. "__ Kids" (2001)
42. Telephone bk. listings
43. Fettuccine is a form
44. Like the CN logo
46. 1928: Trivial Breath poet Ms. Wylie
48. Requirements
52. 'Shake' with a spoon
55. Expressed
57. Shoppers Drug Mart cosmetics line
58. Population counts
60. Temple ceremony
62. Dramatist's division
63. Way to kick the football
64. Creature in a Tennessee Williams play title
65. 17th Greek letter
66. __ in stone
67. More man-of-the-manor-ly

DOWN
11. Deep Purple's "__ on the Water"
2. Radio dial
3. Ms. DeGeneres
4. High Priest in the Old Testament
5. Distance
6. Shangri-la
7. Summarizing papers
8. The Russian language, in Quebec City
9. Band's bitty blaster
10. __ and kin (Friends and family)
11. Goffin-King
penned tune: "Don't __ Change"
12. Pita serving perhaps
14. Scenic driving route in the Avalon region of Newfoundland: 2 wds.
18. Vocalization
21. Bay window
24. Models when on the fashion runway
26. End the endlessness
28. Epochs
30. Spanish artist, Joan __ (b.1893 - d.1983)
31. Goldfish and canaries
32. "__ (Just a Little Bit Harder)" by Janis Joplin
33. Galaxy gr.
34. Mr. Redding
36. Ms. Paltrow, for short
37. Reclined rest
38. Oman money
39. Towards the ship's left side
44. Aim
45. Jeans hue
47. Periodical's particular publishing
49. = meaning
50. One of the NHL's six Sutter Brothers from Viking, Alberta
51. Sun-related
52. Boo-boo in Al Pacino's 1983 flick
53. __-savvy
54. Call Question link
56. CNN anchor Ms. Burnett
59. Un-downs
61. __ of margarine

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
You should know that others notice you today, especially bosses, parents and VIPs. Therefore, be mindful of your behaviour. Fortunately, you will be sympathetic toward someone, which makes you look good.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Thoughts of travelling appeal to you now. In particular, you will appreciate the beauty of arts and crafts from other cultures. You also will enjoy the stimulation of different surroundings.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
If you have to divide or share something with someone today, you will be more than generous. In fact, remember to be fair to yourself as well. Don't give away the farm.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Today you have to go more than halfway when dealing with others. Fortunately, you will find this easy to do because you feel genuinely sympathetic and concerned for someone else's welfare.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Because you feel sympathetic toward a co-worker today, he or she might come to you for advice or counseling. Never pass up an opportunity to practice kindness.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Welcome any opportunity to express your creative talent today. You are not a noun; you are a verb. It's the doing that really counts.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You might want to cocoon at home today and seek out some privacy, because you feel the need to catch your breath and enjoy your own space. That's just fine. We all need to do this from time to time.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
When talking to others today, you won't be satisfied with superficial chitchat. You want a real, meaningful discussion with someone. (Not just comments about the weather.)

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
If out shopping today, you might be tempted to spend too much money on luxurious items. It's your nature to go big or go home.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Today the moon is in your sign, which makes you more emotional than usual. The good news is that this can attract a little bit of extra good luck!

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Today you will prefer some privacy. Ideally, you will work alone or behind the scenes, because this will suit you best.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
A conversation with a female friend is important. Perhaps you need to confide in someone, or someone needs to confide in you.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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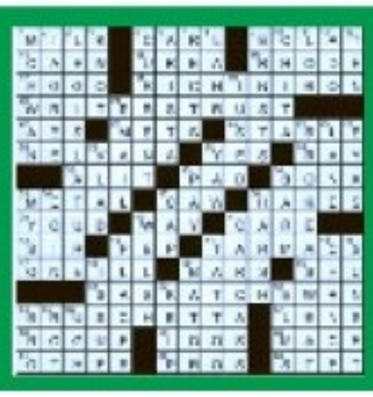

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7	5	2	9	8	3	1	6	4
9	6	4	2	7	1	5	3	8

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